

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (canceled)
2. (canceled)
3. (canceled)
4. (currently amended) The method according to Claim [[3]]
16, characterized in that the purging or evacuation removal step is selected from the group consisting of one of time-controlled, sensor-controlled and event-controlled.
5. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 4, characterized in that the parts of the system to be cleared comprise feed lines, valves, tubing, dead spaces, and patient intake elements.
6. (previously presented) The method according to Claim 5, characterized in that the patient intake elements are selected from the group consisting of nosepieces and masks.
7. (canceled)
8. (currently amended) The method according to Claim [[1]]
18, characterized in that the purging or evacuation step is one of time-controlled, sensor-controlled and event-controlled.
9. (currently amended) The method according to Claim [[1]]
18, characterized in that the parts of the system to be cleared comprise feed lines, valves, tubing, dead spaces, and patient intake elements.
10. (canceled)

11. (currently amended) The device according to Claim [[10]] 20, characterized in that the first gas line includes a pressure gauge, a flowmeter and a gas valve and in that the second line likewise includes a pressure gauge, a flowmeter and a valve.

12. (currently amended) The device according to Claim [[10]] 20, characterized in that the second gas line is a compressed-air connection.

13. (currently amended) The device according to Claim [[12]] 19, characterized in that the removal device includes the evacuation line, and the evacuation line comprises one of an evacuation unit and a connection to an existing evacuation line.

14. (currently amended) The device according to Claim [[11]] 21, characterized in that the evacuation line comprises one of an evacuation unit and a connection to an existing evacuation line.

15. (canceled)

16. (new) A method for the metered administration of one or more therapeutically effective gases to a patient, comprising a step to remove harmful or undesired substances from the gas-carrying system or from parts of the gas-carrying system, characterized in that the therapeutically effective gases are selected from the group consisting of NO, CO, CO₂ mixtures used to stimulate breathing, H₂ mixtures, N₂O mixtures, SF₆ mixtures,

and nitrosoethanol, and the removal step comprising purging with at least one other gas or gas mixture selected from the group consisting of air, O₂, N₂, Ar, Xe, He, SF₆, mixtures thereof and other gases which do not have a therapeutic effect.

17. (new) The method according to Claim 16, characterized in that the removal step further comprises evacuation in addition to the purging.

18. (new) A method for the metered administration of one or more therapeutically effective gases to a patient, comprising a step to remove harmful or undesired substances from the gas-carrying system or from parts of the gas-carrying system, characterized in that the therapeutically effective gases are selected from the group consisting of NO, CO, CO₂ mixtures used to stimulate breathing, H₂ mixtures, N₂O mixtures, SF₆ mixtures, and nitrosoethanol, and the removal step is evacuation.

19. (new) A device for the metered administration of one or more therapeutically effective gases to a patient, comprising a device to remove harmful or undesired substances, characterized by a therapeutic gas feed system including a first line feeding therapeutic gases selected from the group consisting of NO, CO, CO₂ mixtures used to stimulate breathing, H₂ mixtures, N₂O mixtures, SF₆ mixtures, and nitrosoethanol, and the removal device including at least one of a second gas line and an evacuation line in addition to the first gas line, and the second

gas line comprising purging structure for supplying a purging gas selected from the group consisting of O₂, N₂, Ar, Xe, He, SF₆, mixtures thereof and other gases which do not have a therapeutic effect.

20. (new) The device according to Claim 19, characterized in that the removal device includes the second gas line.

21. (new) The device according to Claim 20, characterized in that the removal device also includes the evacuation line.